COPING WITH KETCHUP

Innovation expert brings message to N.B.

■ Jim Carroll visits Fredericton and Saint John this week

BY KEVIN BARRETT
Telegraph-Journal

When Heinz came out with its "upside down," ketchup bottle, Jim Carroll was amazed by the response.

Not by the innovative product's effect on sales, but in the peculiar way people reacted to the bottle. As many people opted to turn the white cap up instead of leaving it pointed down as intended.

And Mr. Carroll says that move is symbolic of how many people in all walks of life resist change.

"People think that innovation is research and development, and these guys running around in white lab coats designing new products," Mr. Carroll said.

"That is not what innovation is. Innovation is every single company in New Brunswick, every individual looking at what they do day to day, sitting back and thinking, 'With the rate of change today, what can I do to do it better, to do it smarter, to do it different and to turn it into opportunity?'

"That's what we have to be doing, but that is what has disappeared the last few years."

Mr. Carroll, a futurist, trends and innovation expert, will lead a three-hour "Coping With Ketchup" seminar for the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce on Dec. 1 at the Fredericton Inn, discussing the role of innovation and how to adapt to the changing role of business. The following day, he will give an all-day seminar at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre.

Mr. Carroll has authored more than 30 books that have sold more than 750,000 copies, including his latest, *What I Learned From Frogs in Texas:*

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Jim Carroll

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INNOVATION: It is critical to recognize change

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Saving Your Skin With Forward-Thinking Innovation.

His seminars will centre on dealing with change in society, ranging through advancements in medical science and technology to adaptations in everyday life.

"The rate of change that is going on today goes far beyond technology," he says. "Folks in Fredericton are impacted by the way the world economy is unfolding in China, they are impacted by the rapid growth in knowledge and by just how rapidly science is evolving today as compared to 10 years ago.

"This is not a technology thing. That is the most important issue."

Mr. Carroll will focus on the ketchup bottle concept, but will also point to an article he wrote regarding 10 things his kids thought were from the "olden days" – including 35 mm film, CDs and airline tickets.

He believes it is critical to recognize those types of changes and adapt to them, regardless of the sector.

Projecting that message and challenging people to think about change in everyday life is one of his goals.

"I want you to watch all the things around you, whether from your work or personal life, and watch how quickly things are becoming something from the olden days," he said.

To combat the changes, businesses must address the future with an open mind.

"I go into companies where the whole essence of the discussion is that we can't do that because we have always done it this way. That is the dumbest thing I have heard.

"We spend our entire time putting in place barriers that define how we can't do things that are new.

"We have to get rid of that."

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